

MAD SCRAMBLE ON FOR NAVY HOUSING

But Status of 4 Buildings in Bronx Occupied by Waves Is Still Not Clear

OWNERS MEET NEXT WEEK

Equipment Not Yet Removed for Apartments—Redecorating Plans May Be Changed

The critical housing shortage in New York was reflected in the mad scramble for apartments yesterday after the announcement by the Navy that four of the seventeen buildings in the Bronx used to house Waves in training at Hunter College had been returned to the owners. Many persons went to the properties, where they were unable to obtain any information, and they and many others telephoned city departments, the Navy and newspapers seeking information.

At the end of a day of confusion the status of the buildings still was not clear, but Henry H. Held of Held & Held, attorneys, said he would call a meeting of the owners for early next week to straighten out the matter. Mr. Held represented a dozen of the owners at conferences early in the year when the Navy announced it had turned back twelve of the buildings, but later changed its mind and kept the properties as housing for the Waves.

Some departments of the Navy told inquirers yesterday that the buildings had not been returned to the owners. The public relations office, however, backed up its original announcement, coming from the Third Naval District Headquarters, that four of the buildings had been vacated by the Waves and had been returned to the owners. It added, though, that the Navy equipment had not yet been removed from the buildings.

No Official Notification

Mr. Held said the owners had not yet been officially notified of the return of their properties. He recalled meetings held last February, when the Navy announced that twelve of the buildings had been returned to the owners.

Meetings were held between the owners, city officials and representatives of the services. In returning the buildings, Mr. Held declared, the Navy wanted to retain 25 per cent of the apartments for its personnel and to screen all applicants. The Army representative said his branch of the service wanted a share in obtaining the apartments, and then the Coast Guard put in a bid.

The upshot of this, Mr. Held continued, was that the Navy decided to continue the properties as housing for the Waves. When the buildings finally are returned to the owners, Mr. Held said, it will take thirty to ninety days to get them ready for civilian occupancy.

In taking over the buildings, the Navy contracted to rehabilitate them before returning them to the owners, but Mr. Held expressed the opinion that the Navy may now agree to let the owners fix up the places and be remunerated by the Navy. This, he said, may save time, for with the labor shortage easing the owners could get the work done quicker.

4,000 Applied in February

At the conferences last February, Joseph Platzker, head of the City Vacancy Listing Bureau, said he had received applications from 4,000 persons who wanted apartments in the buildings. Mr. Platzker recalled yesterday that at the time he turned the list over to the owners, Mr. Held reported yesterday he had received about 1,500 letters from persons desiring apartments in the buildings.

In all there are about 825 apartments in the seventeen buildings, and only four of these buildings are being returned now by the Navy to the owners. Mr. Held estimated that these four buildings could accommodate 200 families. Owners of some of the buildings, however, made commitments to the former tenants that they could have their homes back when the Waves moved out.

Mr. Held said that he was in favor of giving preference to service men or ex-service men, and would suggest that 25 per cent of the apartments be set aside for them. He will take this up with the owners at their meeting next week.

Participation of the City Vacancy Listing Bureau representative in the conferences last February probably gave many persons the idea that the bureau was still interested in the project and they telephoned that department yesterday. They were told that the department had nothing to do with the houses and referred the inquirers to the newspapers.